

Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook

Annual Town Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Town Meeting of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook held at The Council Chamber, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth, Herts at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 09 April 2018.

Present: Cllr Ruth Buckmaster (Town Mayor) Chairman; 18 Local Government Electors for the Parish of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook, (including 8 other Town Councillors). PC Shelly Marshall, Herts Police, Town Clerk Richard Bowran, Town Projects Manager Joanne Sargent Finance Officer Lisa Dale.

The Town Mayor welcomed those present to the Sawbridgeworth Annual Town meeting and explained that this was not a meeting of the Town Council but of the people of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook.

18/01 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 12 April 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

18/02 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from those minutes

18/03 Report by the Mayor on Town Council Activities in 2017/18

The Mayor, Cllr Ruth Buckmaster, reported on the Council's Activities in 2017/18. There were no questions for the Mayor.

18/06.1 Report from Herts Police

PC Shelly Marshall reported on activities in Sawbridgeworth:

- Burglaries have increased this year mainly when homeowners were absent. In January we were hit by cross-border criminals.
- Crime recording parameters have changed
- 22% reduction in thefts from motor vehicles
- Hate crime has increased but probably due to the changes in recording.
- Operation GUARDIAN is in response to burglaries – over 50 video door bells have been installed.
- Operation STOMP will return in the summer, suggestions for target areas will be welcome.
- Operation SCORPION aimed at drugs and gang related crime is still active.
- Some changes in personnel but Sawbridgeworth not affected.
- Thanks to STC for CCTV coverage which has helped achieve convictions and saved police time in court.

There were no questions for the police.

18/04 Report by the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk, Richard Bowran, reported on the Council's Accounts to 31 March 2018. There were no questions for the Clerk.

18/05 The Mayor invited Trustee Reports from Town Charities:

Cllr Angela Alder, Chairman of the **Hailey Centre** reported on activities for the year. She highlighted:

- Providing meals on 4 days a week and a total of 5,400 meals last year and the appointment of a new cook
- 147 seats provided on shopping trips
- 76 completed satisfaction questionnaires
- 2902 using exercise classes
- HertsHealth dementia group well received
- 1,000 man hours per month provided by volunteers.

Cllr David Royle, Secretary to the **Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational Centre** reported on activities for the year. He highlighted:

- The 10 member management committee
- Lisa Dale's role as centre manager
- Plans to meet the need resulting from the expansion of the town.

18/06.2 The Mayor invited Reports from other parties:

Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall.

Cllr R Buckmaster, Council appointed Trustee gave the report to the meeting. She highlighted:

- Very health situation
- Over 50s Forever Active group
- SMH had developed from being a hall for hire into being a community hub.

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster reported on:
Matters at Hertfordshire County Council.

Q. Cllr Burmicz asked if a weight restriction could be placed on vehicles turning into Bell Street.

A. No. Vehicles making deliveries cannot be restricted.

Q. Cllr Burmicz asked if there had been any response from Taylor Wimpey about access to Mandeville school.

A. this is all part of the Masterplanning process.

District Cllr Angela Alder reported on:

Matters at East Herts District Council including a list of things she was involved with. She highlighted:

- Being on the finance scrutiny committee which had been effective in tackling fraud.
- She was loneliness and isolation champion and had created a community forum.
- On HAPTC she had been on the STACC and been involved with plans for catering for additional passenger numbers.
- Task and Finish groups for recreation and swimming pools and the new ground maintenance contract.

District Cllr Eric Buckmaster reported on:
Matters at East Herts District Council. He highlighted:

- The District Plan will be adopted within the next 2 to 3 months.

Cllr Annelise Furness reported on:
Sustainable Journeys to School. She highlighted:

- The multi-schools travel initiative
- The second annual walk to school week
- The town selfie walk
- Park & stride initiatives
- “Put a Spring in your Step” which had good press coverage.
- Multi-school survey to find out what inhibits people from walking or cycling to school.

18/07 Report on the Town Action Plan 2016-2020

The Town Clerk introduced copies of the agreed plan, which had been annotated with actions so far and the addition of some new items.

- Cllr E Buckmaster commented that this was a living document and would be amended to keep up with current developments.
- Cllr Beeching commented that the world is changing and the current SWOT analysis might need revision in due course.

18/08 Resolutions for which written notice had been received

None received.

18/09 Open Forum

Q. Mrs Hazel Mead asked what action had been taken in response to her suggestion about providing a bench at Sheering Mill Lock to celebrate HM The Queen’s 90th Birthday.

A. Clerk replied that no action had been taken.

Q. Mr David Mead asked about damage on the Millennium Maze on Town Green.

A. Cllr Alder replied that EHDC are aware of the need to repair the centre piece. Cllr Beeching suggested that the scouts and/or the guides could remove and repair the centre piece and send the bill to EHDC.

Cllr Heather Riches commented that it was now expected that work on the footings to the surgery expansion should commence by the end of April.

Reports made at the Annual Tow Meeting are attached to these minutes.
They are also posted on the town council web-site.

There being no other questions the Annual Town Meeting closed at 20:35

MAYOR'S REPORT FOR TOWN ANNUAL MEETING 9 APRIL 2018

Welcome everybody to the Annual Town meeting. Thank you for coming.

Sawbridgeworth is a very pleasant place in which to live and work.

In maintaining this the Town Council, staff and councillors, work very hard. There are many events, both fundraising and civic, that are organised and supported by the council, from Fun on the Field, Christmas lights, Remembrance day, civic service and civic dinner. To Walk to School week, schools councils and Town Twinning.

The Town Council continues to sponsor the centenary World War One Commemorations and the committee, along with the uniformed organisations, is planning a finale to mark the end of the War on November 11th.

This is addition to the everyday responsibilities of running our community transport and management of the allotments and cemetery.

Council staff and councillors are here to provide residents information, advice and support in many areas. As Councillor Champions we can also involve residents in shaping and maintaining the town in the way that we want.

I would like to thank our team of PCSOs, Paul Weston and Amanda Higham and our PC Shelly Marshall especially for all their hard work in keeping Sawbridgeworth a safe place to live and supporting our activities such as Christmas Lights and the recent 'Spring in your Step Challenge',

The Council provides direct funding for some of our community trusts as well as providing some discretionary grants to which clubs and associations can apply.

My chosen charities for my year as mayor are Make Lunch and High Wych Pre-School Nursery. Fundraising events I have held this year include my civic service, a Quiz Night, a meal at the New Mexico restaurant, a pamper evening, and my upcoming civic dinner.

I have also had the privilege of attending a large number of events held by community groups both in Sawbridgeworth and across the District.

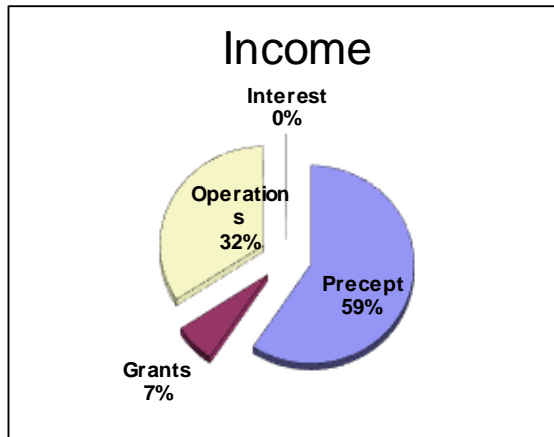
Finally I would like to thank all the Council staff for all their hard work over the last year in everything they do for Sawbridgeworth. My fellow Councillors for their support at my fundraising events and town activities. And the shops, businesses and all the residents young and old for all you do for our town.

Ruth Buckmaster

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 09 APRIL 2018

At the Annual Town Meeting the role of the Clerk is to report on the finances of the Council for the year just ended.

In the year 2017/18 the Town Council's Precept was £267,910, this was 59% of the Council's total income.



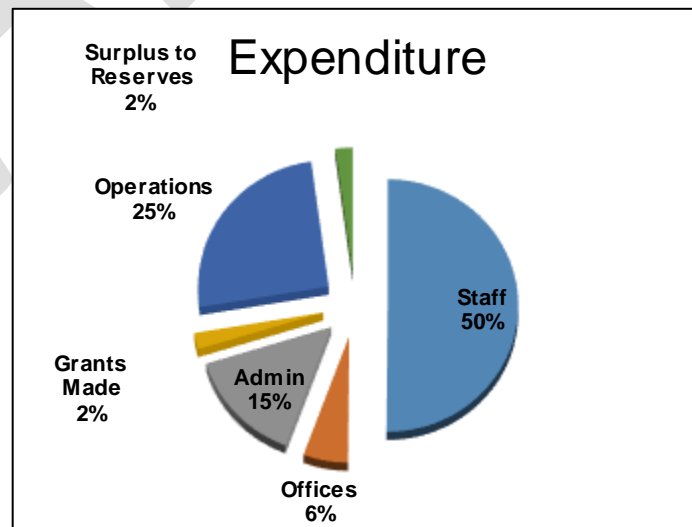
The Council derives other income from its operations in the town, such as the Town Cemetery, the four Allotment Gardens and the Community Bus services. Income relating to these other activities amounted to £153,901 (last year £175,731). The Council's total income for the year was £454,843 (last year £423,796).

The Council is aiming to continue to develop Operations Income to minimise any increase in the Precept.

We spent a total of £415,547 this year (last year £406,026).

Staff costs amounted to 50% of our expenditure; we have a town clerk, a town projects manager, three part time administration officers, the town ranger and two part time bus drivers, this is equivalent to 5.5 FTE staff. All other services are carried out by contractors.

Our operations costs were 25% of our spend, and included management of the Town Cemetery, the Allotment Gardens, Sawbobus, the two Community Minibuses, recreation areas, footpaths, the town ranger, provision and maintenance of Floral Displays, and community events including Fun on the Field and the Christmas Lights Festival.



Our administration costs at 15% of the total included our responsibilities as a Consultee on planning applications and matters relating to the town, removal of Fly Posting, Civic Events, Community Transport, Floral Decorations, Promoting the Town, consultations, subscriptions, insurances and our duty to provide Democratic Services including meetings, committees, elections and representation on outside bodies including liaison with the County and District Councils.

During the year, the Council continued the operation of Sawbobus, now in its ninth year. This has been financed by grants from EHDC and from commercial sponsorship. We have suffered from the lack of any grant funding from Essex CC and will have to think of other ways of sustaining the service to Lower Sheering. It also managed the two Community Minibuses, which are self-financing although take up significant administration time.

The Town Council continues to step in to preserve services to the community when other organisations are unable to continue.

The Council made grants totalling £8,850 to nine different local organisations during the year; these were the Citizens Advice Service, The Multi-School Travel Initiative, AI's Adventures in Wasteland, The Friends of Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres, St Clare's Hospice, the Sawbridgeworth Local History Society, the Town Twinning Association, the Hailey Centre and the Young Peoples Recreation Centre.

The small surplus for the year was principally due to the council's decision not to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, and this has been added to our general reserves.

For this coming year the precept has been increased to £294,701. This is because members of council were very aware on the decrease in support income from other sources and the requirement to maintain reserves. Since the town's housing stock has increased this amounts to an increase of 12.1p per week for a Band D household.

THE HAILEY CENTRE

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2017/18

Objects and Powers

The Trust is established for the benefit of older people in the Parish of Sawbridgeworth with the object of improving their quality of life.

The Board met on four occasions during the period covered by this report and has dealt with matters relating to the efficient running of the Centre including reviewing the health and safety policy, financial management arrangements, staffing and safeguarding issues and rates of pay. The Management Committee has also met four times and has made various recommendations to the Board to enhance the smooth running of Centre activities.

The serving Trustees are:

Councillors – Mrs. Angela Alder - Chairman)
Mr. John Burmicz) four year terms until May 2019
Mrs. Pat Coysten)

Community – Mr. Eric Buckmaster)
Mr. Colin Gill – Honorary Treasurer)
Mr. T. Noakes) three year terms until
Mr. Ralph Reed – Deputy Chairman) May 2020
Mr. Steve Robertson)

The Trustees are grateful to the Town Council for the grant towards the cost of utilities and to Hertfordshire County Council Social Services for its grant towards staffing costs. During this year the Board was grateful for a grant from East Herts Council for the replacement of the flooring in the entrance hall, kitchen and toilets plus wash hand basins and redecoration of the toilet areas. This work will be carried out during April.

The Board gratefully acknowledges the very generous donations during the year from relatives and friends who expressly remember the Centre often through collections given at Funerals and Thanksgiving for the lives of loved ones. Contributions from all sources of financial support are much appreciated and help to keep the running costs down and continue to keep the Centre a welcoming, attractive and vibrant place to visit for the older people of Sawbridgeworth. The Board is very aware of the pressure on local authorities and makes every effort to control expenses as well as raise funds for the benefit of the users of the Centre. The Board is fortunate in having an excellent Honorary Treasurer who keeps a tight control on expenditure.

I am pleased to report our continued good relationship with Sawbridgeworth Town Council officers which has enabled the Centre to utilise the Council Chamber for some fund raising events. The Town Council held several open Saturdays in the Council Chamber during the District Plan consultations which attracted many visitors. On those occasions the connecting door to the Centre was opened to give local people a chance to buy some refreshments in the Centre main hall. An arrangement mutually beneficial.

As last year the Centre Manager conducted a Questionnaire among our users. 76 people completed the Questionnaire with the overwhelming majority specifically mentioning the hot meals and the avoidance of feelings of loneliness and isolation. The following examples are a few of the views expressed by the responders:

"I find it very comforting to be able to come and meet other people so that I am not on my own."

"I have begun to feel a different person since coming to the Hailey Centre. I now have friendly people to mix with and talk to. Before I came I spent days on my own and they often became half a week not speaking to anybody. Life was miserably lonely you couldn't call it living it was just months of existing going nowhere doing nothing and seeing no one. The meals here are wonderful, the people in charge are kind and caring. I prayed to God for his help and he has answered my prayers 100%. Thank you all."

"The chair exercises are helping to keep me mobile."

"A lifeline for people on their own, would not see anyone if I did not use the Centre."

"I cannot believe the pleasure that I have had since coming here, the company and food has brought such pleasure to me, thank you."

"The services offered that I can attend give me a much needed break and I haven't the time when I am at home to do the art work which I love to do."

"Keeping me active."

The Management Committee has met regularly throughout the year and offered sound and practical advice to the Board which has been warmly received and implemented where appropriate.

The annual "Thank you" lunch for our much valued volunteers plus their partners or friends was again well attended and appreciated by all.

Centre activities throughout the year have been well supported and the outings and events enjoyed to the full by Centre users and their friends. The Centre provided 5,400 lunches, up 300 this year. The volunteers continue to provide a cheerful waitress service week in week out without whom the Centre would be hard pressed to maintain the current level of service. I am delighted to report that at our most recent inspection by the Environmental

Health Officer we retained our five star rating for our catering service. We provided 147 seats, up on last year's 127, for food shopping trips dropping users off

at their own front door. The Centre users had 8 days of outings and 2 holidays. We cater for those with specific transport needs by use of taxis. However, the majority of our visitors use Sawbobus or walk. We have four people who use scooters which we accommodate at the rear of the building.

The Centre now runs seven exercise classes including keep-fit, Pilates and Yoga sessions each week with a full complement of participants totalling 2,902 users benefitting from this service. The Photography sessions on Wednesday mornings and the Silver Surfers on Thursday mornings are both "manned" by volunteer instructors and provide a one-to-one teaching session with all slots filled i.e. 150 people are now more IT literate in Sawbridgeworth as a result of these sessions.

Earlier in the year we were approached by Hertshealth concerning the setting up of a dementia support group on a Wednesday morning. It opened for the first clients last August and has been of invaluable assistance to so many families with relatives suffering from early/moderate forms of dementia to mild memory loss. The establishment of this much needed service highlights the inadequacies of the current building as in providing this facility and the exercise sessions has necessitated closing the hall for casual morning coffee visitors. The Board is looking at how the rear area might be better utilised so that more people can benefit from the Centre.

The Whist, Bingo and Art sessions along with craft and decoupage are also fully supported. The Quiz, Film show and Musical afternoons continue to prove highly popular and profitable events. The new Camera Club has just celebrated its sixth birthday and has continued to go from strength to strength. Apart from the fun and pleasure the members derive from the Club itself, where they have been out and about taking photographs, some of which have been used as front covers for our monthly Newsletter, they have assisted with the fund raising activities at the Centre. Many of the Centre users have taken advantage of the Camera club to have their pictures taken for bus passes or passport renewals.

The Management Committee recommended to the Board that we discontinue with separate summer and winter fund raising events and instead take advantage of the opportunities provided via the calendar of community events already part of the local programme. The Board agreed this approach and together with the various raffles have all contributed to the diversity of activities at the Centre. However, one additional fund raising activity was a Race Night which was much enjoyed by our visitors and made a very handy profit towards the Centre funds.

On the first Saturday each month following the closure of the Saturday market we have "bacon butties" on sale and these are doing a roaring trade and helping to boost our fund raising efforts. All these activities have increased not only the income but raised the profile of the Centre and what it can offer to

older people in Sawbridgeworth. Also on the first Saturdays in the month Town Councillors have hosted "Councillor Surgeries" on a quarterly basis for people with problems to meet their local councillor to discuss matters of concern.

The visiting Chiropodists delivered 453 treatments the same as last year. Well cared for feet assist in keeping older people mobile and self-reliant. The Hearing Aid Specialist had 150 consultations and is also helping to meet the growing demand for a very local service. The Centre also carries a supply of batteries which is valued by local people. The attendance at the Centre on a regular basis of these professionals is very much appreciated by the people we serve.

In January the Centre held its annual New Year celebration lunch at the Bishop's Stortford Golf Club which was delicious. The function was a huge success and attended by sixty five regular users of the Centre. As well as our now annual New Year lunch the Centre has special lunch events to celebrate occasions such as Mothering Sunday, Valentine's day, Easter, Father's Day, Halloween and our own Christmas lunch in the Centre.

The Centre has received regular press coverage over the twelve months giving a positive picture of a Centre for older people being active, helping older people lead fulfilled lives and enjoying themselves with much of this attributable to our present and former Managers with their vision for engaging older people in a proactive role.

On the staff side there have been a number of changes. Julie Bradley, resigned her role as Assistant to the Centre Manager but still provides a service to our exercise classes as an independent contractor. Debbie Nicholas has replaced Julie as Assistant to the Centre Manager. We have recently appointed a new Cook as replacement for Fiona Gibbins who needed more time to visit her ageing father in Cumbria. The Centre Manager, Susan Fitzwilliams, Lyn O'Hanlon and Charlotte Birks all continue in our employment. Our employees have the option to join the pension scheme if they wish and the Board is grateful for the expertise of our Honorary Treasurer, Mr. Colin Gill, who has ensured that we are legally compliant with a properly validated Pension Scheme for Centre employees.

The Board wishes to acknowledge with grateful thanks the valuable contribution of the volunteers who give over 1,000 volunteer "man" hours per month to the running of the Centre and without whose willing help the Centre would not be the vibrant and happy place it is today. The Board would also wish to place on record its thanks to the staff who provide a friendly and welcoming environment for all visitors and users of the Hailey Centre week by week throughout the year. On a personal note I would like to add my thanks for the dedication and commitment of the Centre Manager, her contribution to the smooth running of the Centre is inestimable. This year saw the resignation of Tony Fitch a founder Trustee due to failing health we wish him well in his retirement and welcome Ted Noakes as his replacement, Ted provides the art work for the monthly Newsletter and is a very welcome addition to the Board.

It is also my very real pleasure to thank my Deputy Chairman, Ralph Reed, and all the volunteer Trustees for their help and support throughout the year.

Thank you

Angela Alder
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
April 2018

DRAFT

**SAWBRIDGEWORTH YOUNG PEOPLE'S RECREATION CENTRE
(SYPRC)
REPORT FOR 2017/18 TOWN ANNUAL MEETING 9 APRIL 2018**

In 1969 the Secretary of State for Education transferred the trusteeship of the original Children's Playing Field and Recreation Ground Foundation, dating back to 1933, to the then Sawbridgeworth Urban District Council. The beneficiaries of the Trust are young people resident in Sawbridgeworth up to the age of 22 and in particular up to the age of 17.

SYPRC has a management committee of 10 members who are subject to the approval of the Sawbridgeworth Town Council, consisting of four councillors and six other members.

At the SYPRC AGM on 24 October 2017 the following were nominated and subsequently approved by the Town Council at their meeting on 25 October:

- **Cllrs. Sotirios Adamopoulos, Angela Alder (Deputy Chairman), Ruth Buckmaster (Chairman) and David Royle (Secretary)**
- **Ron Alder; Steve Day; (Cllr.) Annelise Furnace; Gill Hawkins; Joanne Sargant (Treasurer) and Harriet Smith.**

Mrs Lisa Dale is the Centre Manager responsible for all bookings and enquiries and reports to the Committee at their meetings. She is also responsible for the cleaning of the hall and other areas and the Committee wishes to record its thanks to her for all the work she does on the day-to-day running of the Centre.

The Committee has met four times to date, including the AGM in October and a Special Meeting in March 2018. No AGM was held in 2016 so the audited reports and accounts for both the years ending December 2015 and 2016 were presented and approved at the AGM.

The Centre continues to be fully utilised during the day and on weeknights by a range of groups and also at weekends for children's parties. The main user continues to be the High Wych Pre-Nursery but it is also used by Clubbaccise, Youth Create, Graham School of Dance, Woodturners, Youth Connexions Youth Club, Diverse Performing Arts, Karate and Kung Fu. There is also a Summer Play Scheme organised by Pathways Plus.

At its first full meeting in November 2017 the Committee identified a number of priorities and projects it needs to undertake to improve the Centre and maximise its use, in particular resurfacing the car park, new flooring and conversion of the former changing rooms to usable space. The Committee is currently exploring funding sources, grants etc. to make these changes. However, at a Special Meeting on 27 March 2018, Committee members also considered what improvements might be needed to the Centre and playing area to meet the expected increased demand from residents of the 500 new houses planned for Sawbridgeworth in West Road and at Kecksy's over the next few years. Accordingly, we will shortly get advice on what structural improvements are feasible and affordable, including renovating the changing rooms, increasing storage space etc. We will also explore opportunities to access Section 106 developer funds from the new developments mentioned above.
David Royle (SYPRC Secretary)

SAWBRIDGEMOUTH MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2017-18

The Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall Trust continues to provide an exceptionally strong community offering.

In addition to provide space for hire for clubs and associations the Trust runs a variety of events in its own right in order to remain viable and secure the hall for the future.

The year-end accounts will be finalised by end of April but trading is likely to show a surplus of around £40,000.

A recent extension to the hall has cost £40,000 so even with that extraordinary expenditure the trust will break even.

The Trust currently has £85,000 cash at the bank.

Where possible the trust will also seek external funding through grant applications for capital works or revenue grants to run community projects.

A good example of this is the initial funding to support a variety of physical activities for the over 50s in order to improve their health and wellbeing under East Herts Council Forever Active programme. Table Tennis, short mat bowls, tai chi, and line dancing are examples of just a few of the activities available and some with coaches on hand to assist.

Regular programming at the Memorial Hall includes Sawbo Cinema, Jazz Club, rock and pop groups, and pantomime at Christmas.

Every November during Remembrance weekend the Hall hosts a very successful Nostalgia Day which is enjoyed by people of all ages. More recently Sawbo's Got Talent showcased the many skills of the young people of our town.

The Hall has also provided a venue for exhibitions of art and photographs as well as for model The regular hirers include U3A, Sawbo Saplings, the Women's Institute, Diverse Performing Arts, Youth Create, and Jo Jingles.

The trustees recently agreed to reduce the prices for any family orientated events for 2018 and look forward to another successful year.

Ruth Buckmaster

County councillor report April 2018 Sawbridgeworth Annual Town Meeting

Potholes and other issues.

The weather the winter has been particularly bad with snow and higher rainfall and much surface water. The drains and gullies in Sawbridgeworth are due to be cleared during April and May.

The additional work required to deal with the impacts of the weather has meant that some resurfacing work, e.g. in West Road has been delayed. However, I am assured that this will remain a priority and be undertaken early in the financial year.

Residents and Councillors can go online to register Highways faults whether they be potholes or faulty lights. The link is

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/>

Highways and Safety

A number of issues have been brought to my attention by residents. There are locations around town where parking close to junctions is a problem. It is my intention to introduce yellow lines on the junction of Cutforth Road and Cambridge Road (currently under consultation) as well as at Burnside at the junction with Bonks Hill. I have also commissioned a traffic flow study in the area which includes Fair Green, Sheering Mill Lane, Vantorts Road, and Fairway. I am awaiting the report which I hope will enable consideration of clearer priorities in Fair Green, and a possible one-way system through Sheering Mill lane and Fairway. The priority in all of this will be to improve the safety of both pedestrians and motorists.

Another persistent problem is the junction of Bell Street with London Road. The railings are regularly damaged through oversize lorries misjudging the turn. I have been asking officers to come up with solutions which may require slightly reconfiguring the junction. These things take time but I'll persist.

Footpaths

There are two footpaths that are not the responsibility of the County Council but are in a very poor state. The footpath near Fawbert and Barnard school is unclaimed. The Town Council have been trying to confirm ownership of the footpath at Elmwood. I have access to funds to surface them subject the Town Council obtaining quotations for the work and committing to future maintenance.

Walking and Cycling and Sawbridgeworth Masterplanning

Under the District Plan Sawbridgeworth is expected to have at least 500 homes, 300 of them on West Road and 200 north of Sawbridgeworth. I am currently undertaking masterplanning sessions with local members and residents and we are meeting all three developers, Barrett's, Taylor Wimpey, and Countryside. I have also commissioned, via the Town Council, a walking and cycling study. The idea is to ensure that any new developments are fully integrated with the town with good access for walking and cycling and to encourage more sustainable forms of travel. The developers along with Highways will also look at options for improving the four-way junction with Cambridge Road, West Road and Station Road, and this is likely to be traffic signals rather than the current roundabouts.

Primary Education

In conjunction with the housing developments Mandeville School will expand to be two forms of entry.

Secondary School admissions

The percentage of Hertfordshire applicants that have been allocated a school of preference at either National Allocation Day or Continuing Interest 1 is now 96.3%. This is compared with 94% on National Allocation Day.

Scrutiny

As a member of Herts County Council Scrutiny Committee I have chaired a number of topic groups scrutinising our Health Trusts. In the autumn we scrutinized Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group over their decision to cease funding of a respite home for families with severely disabled children. A judicial review recently overturned the decision to stop funding and they must now follow due process and consult with partners especially the County Council. Last month we scrutinised our local Hospital Trusts including Princess Alexandra and the Lister. Following a report by the Care Quality Commission Princess Alexandra Hospital was able to come out of 'Special Measures'. They are preparing an Outline Business Case to the Government to potentially rebuild a new Health and Wellbeing Hub in a new location.

This year has seen a number of public consultations.

Minerals Extraction Plan. This follows a similar process to the District Plan. Briggens park was included as a preferred option along with three other specific sites. This was of major concern to all of us locally but especially to residents of Stanstead Abbots where the potential site would sit between the village and the proposed Gilston Development. Concerns included the length of time of the extraction, impact on the environment and traffic through and near the villages. East Herts council responded in opposition to the inclusion in the Minerals Plan.

Waste Consultation. Hertfordshire County Council, as Waste Planning Authority for Hertfordshire, sought the views of all interested parties on the way forward for waste planning in the county.

This Initial Consultation was the first consultation that Hertfordshire County Council has published during the process of reviewing the county's existing Waste Local Plan (WLP).

The responses to these consultations are currently being reviewed.

Inspiring Libraries Strategy

Another consultation of interest to residents was the Inspiring Libraries Consultation. County was asking residents for ideas for shaping the service in the future. This could include staying under direct control of the county, or going into partnership with other organisations, or being outsourced to a third party. The strategy is an innovative and ambitious programme designed to ensure that Hertfordshire continues to be a leading library authority, providing high quality library services to meet the changing demands of the next decade. The results of the consultation are due to be published soon and further work will be undertaken towards fulfilling the strategy.

Sawbridgeworth Library

Last year a proposal was made to relocate the Library to coexist with the Fire Station. There was some public opposition along with a petition. The situation is still under review and I have no further update to give at this time. Regardless of the location the library is moving toward being run as a community library with volunteers who are currently being recruited and trained. There will be up to 20 hours per week of paid staff on site.

Warm Homes:

New scheme launched to help Hertfordshire residents stay warm in their homes
A new scheme that provides free or discounted household improvements to help residents stay warm in their homes has been launched by Hertfordshire County Council in partnership with all 10 district and borough councils.

In Hertfordshire, over 32,000 households are estimated to live in fuel poverty meaning they do not have enough money to adequately heat their home. Colder temperatures can lead to excess winter deaths. Between August 2013 and July 2016, there were 1795 excess winter deaths in Hertfordshire. The Hertfordshire Warmer Homes scheme aims to make homes easier and cheaper to heat by offering free or discounted energy efficiency measures, such as insulation and heating repair, or fuel switching advice to low-income and vulnerable households.

The Hertfordshire Warmer Homes scheme will be managed by the National Energy Foundation, using funding from the national Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and local authority contributions. It will run to 31 October 2018.

Please help us raise awareness of this scheme with the vulnerable residents you are in touch with by publicising it through your own channels. Anyone can find out more information by contacting HertsHelp on: 0300 123 4044 (local rate) or info@hertshelp.net. Alternatively, please visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertswarmerhomes

[Eric Buckmaster April 2018](#)

District Councillor Report Annual Town Meeting April 2018

Grants. In the past 12 months we have revised our grants policy to focus on areas of particular need within the District and particularly in addressing areas of multiple deprivation, tackling social isolation, encouraging physical activity, and promoting good health and wellbeing among our residents. Community grants of up to £3,000 are available for community organisations to run programmes to promote good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Update on our Health and Wellbeing strategy. Our strategy is currently being updated to ensure that there is a focus across all council functions towards improving the health and wellbeing of our communities and enhancing the quality of people's lives (two of our key corporate priorities). We have achieved great success across East Herts in providing physical activities for the over 50s, many of which are held in Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall. We are also running a successful pilot in Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth for Social Prescribing. We have a coordinator now who works out of many GP practices who can direct people to social and physical activity that will reduce isolation and improve their health, and perhaps also reduce reliance on medication. We are also looking at programmes that will tackle obesity particularly in young people and aim to reduce incidents of type 2 obesity through lifestyle change. It is recognised that access to recreation and open spaces is important in planning as well as maintaining opportunities for walking and cycling.

Leisure and Culture

East Herts is currently consulting on options for a new Arts Centre in Bishops Stortford as part of the regeneration of the Old River Lane/Causeway site. The Rhodes Birthplace Trust along with Bishops Stortford Town council and East Herts Council have signed Heads of Terms to signal cooperation in this venture. The Arts Centre could house a 500 seat theatre, Library, 2 to 3 niche cinema screens, and studios. This will form part of a wider site to include some housing, particularly for older people and shops and restaurants. There is currently a planning application for a 540 space multi storey car park at Northgate End to replace the surface car parking currently in the Causeway.

East Herts is also beginning the procurement process for a new leisure contract across the District. The aim is to substantially improve the leisure offering and to turn a net cost to the council into a service that provides an income. Grange Paddocks in Bishops Stortford will be replaced by an entirely new centre and improvements will be made to Hartham in Hertford. East Herts is continuing to have discussions with the schools concerning the joint use pools, including Leventhorpe. The procurement process will include the option for Leisure Providers to provide a variant bid to run the joint use pools. Currently 40% of the cost of running the school owned pools comes from the Government via ESF funding.

'East Herts Article 4 Directions. There are 42 Conservation areas across the district. There has been some concern that with the arrival of permitted development rights there could be damage done to our Conservation areas in our towns and villages.

Following a pilot in Bishops Stortford we decided at Executive this month that Article 4 directions will need to apply to all of our conservation areas. This means that now there will be a local land charge that will apply so that owners within a conservation area who would otherwise have permitted development rights will need to engage with the council by applying for planning permission. The process for introducing additional Article 4 directions could take up to 2 years and will start in the Ware plus south west area, followed by Hertford, Buntingford plus north , then Sawbridgeworth plus south east. Once introduced they will be monitored to ensure their effectiveness in preserving and enhancing conservation areas.

District Plan. The Examination in Public of the District Plan by the Planning Inspector took place in the Autumn. Following that a consultation on the main modifications to the District Plan has recently closed. Responses will be sent directly to the Inspector. It is expected that we shall have an approved adopted Plan by the summer. Sawbridgeworth will have at least 500 homes, 300 of them on sites in West Road. Master-planning sessions have been taking place with the developers to help shape the developments and integrate them with the rest of the town. Some of the output from these sessions is available at the Annual Town meeting.